

# UPDATE

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## Food Labeling: Questions and Answers

### **What changes is FDA contemplating for the food label to help combat obesity?**

The OWG (Obesity Working Group) recommends several main areas for the FDA to consider - calories, serving sizes, carbohydrates, and comparative labeling statements. One of the calorie recommendations is to solicit comment on how to give more prominence to calories on the food label. For serving sizes, FDA will reevaluate the agency's regulations about serving sizes in order to give consumers the most accurate information about the serving size and caloric content of the packaged foods they purchase.

### **What changes can FDA make to the Nutrition Facts Panel (NFP) to emphasize calories?**

Possible changes to the NFP might include: (1) increasing the font size for calories; (2) providing a percent Daily Value for calories; and (3) eliminating "calories from fat" listing as this takes the emphasis away from "total calories."

### **Is FDA considering allowing any health claims related to obesity?**

Yes. Based on the recommendations in the OWG report, FDA will be publishing an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) to consider whether to allow health claims on certain foods that meet FDA's definition of "reduced" or "low" calorie. (An example of such a health claim for a "reduced" or "low" calorie food might be: "Diets low in calories may reduce the risk of obesity, which is associated with type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.")

### **Does FDA encourage the use of any dietary guidance statements concerning obesity?**

Yes. The OWG report recommends that FDA encourage manufacturers to use dietary guidance statements. (Examples of dietary guidance statements are, "To manage your weight, balance the calories you eat with your physical activity"; "have a carrot, not the carrot cake.")

### **Why is serving size information on the NFP important?**

The serving size is critical to nutrition labeling since all the information on nutrient levels depends on the amount of the product represented. In addition, the accuracy of the information in the NFP is crucial for consumers who use this information to monitor their intake of calories and nutrients.

### **What actions is FDA considering regarding serving sizes?**

The report recommends two separate actions. The first is to encourage manufacturers to take advantage of the flexibility in current regulations on serving sizes. This flexibility allows food packages to be labeled as a single serving if the entire contents of the package can reasonably be consumed at a single-eating occasion. The second step is to solicit comment via ANPRMs on 1) whether to require additional columns in the NFP to list the quantitative amounts and percent Daily Value for the entire package or declare the whole package as a single serving for products that can reasonably be consumed at one eating occasion and 2) which, if any, reference amounts customarily consumed (RACCs) of food categories appear to have changed the most over the past decade and require updating.

